

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 8282

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LEADER OF POLITICAL REFORM,
RELATIONS WITH OTHER SOCIALISTS

1. IN EXTENDED CONVERSATION WITH DCM, SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC
(REFORMA SOCIAL ESPANOLA) LEADER MANUEL CANTARERO EXPRESSED
EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT THE POLITICAL REFORM BILL WOULD PASS
THROUGH THE CORTES, AND WHILE HE SHOWED INTEREST IN THE
VARIOUS ELECTORAL RULES WHICH MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY BE APPLIED
AND THEIR POSSIBLE EFFECTS, HE INDICATED NO PARTICULAR
PREFERENCE.

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2. HE EXPRESSED BELIEF THAT THE LEFT--

ESSENTIALLY, THE COMMUNISTS AND THE PSOE "REVOVADOS"--
DID NOT WANT ELECTIONS, ON THE BASIS THAT IT WOULD LOSE
THEM, AND THUS WAS DISPOSED BOTH TO BLOCK THEIR BEING HELD
AND, IF THEY CAME ABOUT ANYWAY, TO REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE
IN THEM. HE WENT ON, HOWEVER, TO ASSERT THE BELIEF THAT
THE ELECTORATE WOULD PARTICIPATE SUBSTANTIALLY--AS MUCH
AS 80 PERCENT--IN THE REFERENDUM AND IN THE ELECTIONS,
AND THAT IN SUCH A CASE THE LEFT WOULD BE MORALLY OBLIGED TO
ADMIT ITS DEFEAT.

3. CANTARERO ALSO SHOWED CONSIDERABLE BITTERNESS OVER THE
PUBLICITY AND FINANCIAL BACKING BEING ACCORDED PSOE RENOVADO
LEADER FELIPE GONZALEZ. IN FACT, SAID CANTAREO, HIS OWN
RSE IS IN VIRTUALLY COMPLETE IDEOLOGICAL TUNE WITH WEST
GERMANY'S SPD, WHILE GONZALEZ, TO THE EXTENT THAT HE HAS
ANY FORMED IDEOLOGY AT ALL, REMAINS MIRED IN THE BASIC PRECEPTS
OF 1848. CANTARERO WAS ALSO INDIGNANT ABOUT THE EXTENT TO
WHICH PCE LEADER SANTIAGO CARRILLO HAD BEEN ALLOWED TO BECOME
THE ARBITER OF THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

4. CANTARERO ACKNOWLEDGED CONCERN OVER THE DAMAGE CONZALEZ'
PUBLICITY AND FINANCIAL BACKING WERE DOING TO THE CAUSE OF
MODERATE SOCIALISM IN SPAIN. WHILE HIS NATION-WIDE ORGANIZATION
REMAINED STRONG AND PROBABLY SUPERIOR TO THAT OF ANY OTHER
PARTY, HE SAID, THE LACK OF FUNDS AND PUBLICITY WAS HURTING,
AND HE WAS WORRIED ABOUTNQOW THINGS WOULD WORK OUT.

5. REGARDING POSSIBLE ELECTORAL ALLIANCES, CANTARERO POINTED
TO THE IDEOLOGICAL SIMILARITIES EXISTING AMONG HIS PARTY,
THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDE) OF GARCIA LOPEZ, AND THE PSOE
"HISTORICOS." AGREEMENT WITH THE PSDE WAS BEING HAMPERED,
HOWEVER, HE SAID, BY GARCIA LOPEZ' DIFFICULT PERSONALITY;
IN THE CASE OF THE PSOE HISTORICOS, CANTARERO WAS VAGUE
ABOUT THAT THE PROBLEM WAS, BUT APPEARED TO BE CONCERNED
OVER THEIR RELATIVE LACK OF FOLLOWING AND ANTIQUE IMAGE.
HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEIR MERE DUBBING WITH THE "HISTORIDO"
SLUG HURT THEM. (THE PRESS SUBSEQUENTLY REPORTED THE FORMATION
OF A "LIAISON COMMITTEE" BETWEEN THE PSDE AND THE HISTORICOS
--SEPTTEL.)

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6. CANTARERO ALSO DISCUSSED OTHER GROUPS AND LEADERS IN
THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, BUT MADE CLEAR THAT HE
DID NOT CONSIDER THEM POSSIBLE POLITICAL ALLIES ON ESSENTIALLY
IDEOLOGICAL, AND ALSO TACTICAL, GROUNDS. HE EXPLAINED THAT
HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT, IN THE FACE OF THE THREAT OF RADICAL
SOCIALISM, TO "MAINTAIN IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY" AS A MEANS OF
PRESERVING FOR THE ELECTORATE THE OPTION OF DEMOCRATIC
SOCIALISM UNALLOYED BY ASSOCIATION WITH LIBERALS OR OTHERS

(SUCH AS CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS) MORE TO THE RIGHT.

7. COMMENT: WE SHOULD NOTE THAT OTHER OBSERVERS HAVE BEEN LESS CATEGORICAL THAN CANTARERO ABOUT THE SURETY OF AN EMERGENCE FROM THE CORTES OF A POLITICAL REFORM PROJECT THAT WILL DRAW WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE. HOWEVER, IF THE BILL COMES OUT OK, MOST HAVE THOUGHT THAT ONCE THE ELECTORAL GAME GETS UNDER WAY, THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT WILL PLAY. (CERTAINLY THE PSOE LEADERSHIP, GONZALEZ, MUGCA, ET AL SEEM TO WANT TO PLAY.) ON THE OTHER HAND, CANTARERO IS FAR FROM ALONE ON THE LEFT IN HIS BITTERNESS OVER GONZALEZ' PUBLICITY AND FUNDING. WHILE CANTARERO'S INSISTENCE ON THE PRESERVATION OF "IDEOLOGICAL IDENTITY" APPEARS TO LIMIT HIS RANGE OF POTENTIAL POLITICAL PARTNERS, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE NOT SYMPATHIZE WITH HIS MOTIVES.

8. CANTARERO IS AN ATTRACTIVE AND WIDELY RESPECTED POLITICAL FIGURE, BUT HIS HERITAGE AS A YOUNG MILITANT IN THE FALANGIST YOUTH HAS MADE HIM SUSPECT, UNFAIRLY, ONE THINKS, IN THE EYES OF SOME. THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF HIS POLITICAL APPEAL REMAIN OPEN TO QUESTION, AND HIS FUTQPE ALMOST CERTAINLY DEPENDS ON A MERGER OR ELECTORAL COALITION JOINING HIS RSE WITH OTHER LIKE-MINDED GROUPS. CANTARERO'S ENMITY TOWARD THE PSOE HAD ITS COUNTERPART IN PSOE LEADERSHIP, BELIEFS THAT HE IS TOO TAINTED BY HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE PAST REGIME TO BE A CREDIBLE SPOKESMAN FOR SPANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.
STABLER

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